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14 March 1961

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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State Dept. review completed

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Laos: Kong Le - Pathet Lao forces apparently continue efforts to exploit their successes along the Vientiane - Luang Prabang highway. Pathet Lao guerrilla forces in the area apparently are being activated to assist in this effort; General

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Phoumi is reported to have admitted that Muong Kassy was taken by irregular troops.

On the political side, there are reports that the Lao government delegation arriving in Phnom Penh today for additional talks with Souvanna Phouma will also meet with Pathet Lao representatives

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Peiping and Hanoi seem particularly disturbed by the Phnom Penh meeting between Souvanna Phouma and Phoumi. While avoiding any direct criticism of Souvanna, they are re-broadcasting Pathet Lao statements clearly intended to remind Souvanna that his position would be weak were it not for the support of pro-Communist military forces in Laos. Peiping, on 12 March, carried a Pathet Lao item which did not mention Souvanna by name but pointedly implied that he could not control developments in Laos.

*A 13 March Pathet Lao broadcast likened the recent Phoumi-Souvanna communiqué to the 19 February proposal of King Savang for a neutral nations commission and noted that Souvanna had already rejected this proposal. The broadcast declared that the Pathet Lao would "oppose all concessions which are against the interests of the nation"

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*USSR-UN: Khrushchev reportedly has instructed the Eastern European satellite governments that the bloc's general line at the resumed session of the General Assembly should be to improve the atmosphere for East-West negotiations. In these instructions, the Soviet premier did not introduce any novel concepts. He indicated that the Soviet scheme for general and complete disarmament would not be modified but that the USSR would be ready to engage in bilateral talks with the US. Khrushchev hinted, however, that if the US refused to take a "constructive" approach, the USSR would renew its demand for a

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[special assembly session on disarmament, presumably attended by heads of government. He set forth a negative line on the Congo crisis, indicating that the bloc's main purpose should be to oppose any decisions damaging to the Gizenga regime.] (Backup, Page 3)

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Iran: Prime Minister Sharif-Emami has appointed non-political technicians to the key ministries of foreign affairs, interior, and finance in his new cabinet. The prime minister's resignation on 11 March and his reappointment was a pro forma maneuver in connection with the installation of a new parliament following the recent election. Nevertheless, the occasion has enabled him to strengthen the cabinet, especially in the appointment of General Amir-Azizi as interior minister.

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Khrushchev Sets Bloc Line for UN General Assembly

[Khrushchev pointed out that since the US election, the Soviet Union had "done everything" to improve relations with the US and thus open the way to a solution of the most important international problems. He cited the release of the RB-47 fliers, withdrawal of the Soviet item on "aggressive" actions of the US Air Force from the General Assembly's agenda, and Moscow's decision not to publish its note protesting an alleged "violation by an American aircraft of the USSR's northern frontier" after the President had stated that such flights would not be repeated. Although Khrushchev complained about the "contradiction" between US declarations and actions, he said the bloc's general line should be to work for improving the atmosphere for negotiations, but, at the same time, to manifest "firmness of principles" so as to obtain "concrete" solutions.]

[On disarmament, Khrushchev claimed that the USSR's scheme for general and complete disarmament has already gained the support of a "majority of humanity" and that the US and its allies are becoming isolated on this issue. He indicated that the Soviet position would not be modified, that bloc delegations should work to have the General Assembly endorse the principles of general disarmament, and that they should support the 12-nation resolution, drafted by India last fall, calling for general disarmament. He made it clear, however, that these tactics would not preclude bilateral US-Soviet negotiations, should the US "assume a more flexible position" and take the initiative for such talks. He said that if, on the other hand, the US "withdraws from constructive discussion," this would create a favorable situation for renewing the Soviet proposal for a special assembly session on disarmament, presumably attended by heads of government.]

[With regard to the Congo crisis, Khrushchev claimed that the USSR had been prepared for serious discussion with the US to work out a common line, but that American actions show that the US intends to support the "colonialists." In this situation, said Khrushchev, the bloc's general line will be to oppose any]

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[decisions which could damage the interests of the "legal government of the Congo," i. e. , Gizenga's Stanleyville regime.]

[Although the question of Laos has not been placed on the assembly's agenda, Khrushchev urged that bloc delegates seize every opportunity to express support for the views of Souvanna Phouma and Prince Sihanouk, particularly the proposal for an international conference on Laos. He defined bloc interests as keeping Laos out of any "political and military bloc" and ensuring that it pursues a policy of "genuine neutrality."]

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New Iranian Cabinet

General Amir-Azizi, minister of interior in Iran's new cabinet, replaces General Alavi-Moqadam, who under the Shah's direction was primarily responsible for [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] This is perhaps intended to give the impression of punishment for Alavi-Moqadam; at the same time, however, it is rumored that he will be given an ambassadorial post, perhaps in Turkey or Spain, suggesting a reward for carrying through the elections successfully in spite of protests by the nationalist opposition.

Amir-Azizi has established a record for honesty and hard work in his two years as chief of the gendarmerie and has greatly reduced the corruption which has long plagued that force.

The new foreign minister, Hossein Qods-Nakhai, is a career Foreign Ministry official who has been ambassador in London and is among Iran's foremost literary men. He is believed solidly pro-Western, has a reputation for scrupulous honesty, and has been described as Iran's ablest diplomat.

Other new appointees, as well as the holdovers from the previous cabinet, are competent and nonpolitical. [Lt. General Timur Bakhtiar apparently still remains as chief of the National Intelligence and Security Organization (SAVAK), although Prime Minister Sharif-Emami had said that Bakhtiar--as well as General Abdullah Hedayat, chief of the Supreme Commander's Staff, and General Haj Ali Kia, the staff's chief of intelligence--would be replaced. It is possible that these changes will yet be made. The Iranian ambassador in Washington, Ardeshir Zahedi, son-in-law of the Shah, reportedly has complained to the Shah about Bakhtiar's "conduct and contacts" during a recent visit in the United States.]

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The new cabinet appears generally of greater competency than the previous one; the Shah will still make all important decisions. The prime minister and the parliament will continue to limit themselves to approving the Shah's decisions. [REDACTED]

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